

Then I Watch You Sleep

by Beth Arritt

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Summary: After a long day, Sam watches her daughter sleep and reflects on the past.

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As usual, all characters belong to Cynthia Saunders, Sanders/Moses Productions, NBC, and the wonderful cast and crew of Profiler. I'm only borrowing them for a bit, and I promise to hand them back unharmed and not make any money off them while they're here.

Then, I Watch You Sleep by Beth Arritt Copyright 1997

I watch you sleep. You lie there, so peaceful, and I wonder how you can possibly be dreaming of sunshine and flowers when practically all you've known is darkness and evil. As I sit on the edge of your bed, you smile a little and shift position, hugging that panda bear who's almost as big as you are. The smile remains on your tiny face as if to say, "Lighten up, Mom," a thought that brings a smile to my face as well.

Your inner peace is definitely a gift from your dad. He was always calm and at peace. It used to drive me crazy when we would fight--correction, I would fight, he would just sit there calmly stating his position until the argument was resolved. I complained about that, of course, but secretly I loved that trait in him. He was my anchor. When my mind became chaotic and tortured from trying to out-think killers and rapists, I would come home, and your dad would be waiting. He'd take me in his arms, and his calm peace would transfer a bit of itself into me, until the darkness in my head would be chased away by his light.

But often the brighter a light burns, the faster it burns out. And then there are lights like Tom's. Lights that are smashed and

shattered before they get a chance to burn out. I could lay blame in that case all night, but it never gets me anywhere, and I'm not in the mood. I'd rather sit here and soak in the peace that surrounds you.

You're my own personal heroine, although I doubt you'll ever realize it. When your dad left us, it was you that kept me going. All those mornings I would lie in bed and wish I never had to get up again, I would picture your face, smiling, and I knew I could get up and make it through another day. For you. Eventually the pain began to dull. And still I lived for you. Any joy in my life was there because you brought it to me. I could almost forget the darkness that lurked, at times, because you were there.

But none of us can hide forever. And the work found me again. They call it a gift, and I suppose it is. But the gift is to the rest of the world, not to me. I spend my energy putting these sick, twisted people away, even as others just like them sit at home and think up new ways to throw curves at me. I sacrifice myself, I sacrifice you, all to take one more criminal out of commission, at least for a time. A gift? Not to me. To me, it is a curse. But to ignore the ability and let the guilty run free to do more harm when I can do something to stop it would destroy me even worse.

So I go on. I go to work, I come home, and sometimes, when I think I can't take it anymore, I draw from your peace much as I did from your father. I try not to do it too often, fearing superstitiously that it will somehow drain your allotment of peace and cause you harm down the road. But sometimes I can't help myself.

It's getting late, and I can tell you're far off in dreamland, so I quietly tuck the covers up around you and head for the door. I pause in the doorway to take one more long look at you, and offer up yet another fervent prayer that your perceptive streak never develops into anything resembling my curse. Such a so-called gift is not meant to cohabit with such peace. It would eat a peaceful mind up like a quick and painful cancer. No, I would give anything to keep that from happening. I'd like to say God wouldn't be that cruel, but I've seen first hand what God allows to happen here. Maybe everyone does get their justice in the end, and maybe there is a higher plan that everything I see is leading to. I hope so, because I refuse to believe that it all happens for nothing.

At least, I usually refuse to believe that. But sometimes that belief gets shaken. When that happens, my faith needs to be restored. Then, I watch you sleep.

End
file.